

Remarks

In the Office action dated December 20, 2007 ("Office action"), the Examiner imposes a nine-way restriction requirement as follows:

Group A – claims 1-11, and 15-24;
Group B – claims 12-14, 25-27, and 50-51;
Group C – claims 28-35;
Group D – claims 36-40;
Group E – claims 41-42;
Group F – claims 43-49;
Group G – claims 52-57;
Group H – claims 58-71; and
Group I – claims 72-77.

Applicants elect Group A, which includes claims 1-11, and 15-24, with traverse. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterizations and classifications of the claims, and with the need for a restriction requirement between Groups C, D, and F. In the Office action, the Examiner takes the position that Groups C, D, and F are independent or distinct. (See MPEP § 806.05(j)). Specifically, the Examiner states that the groups as claimed have "a materially different mode of operation," and that the groups as claimed "do not encompass overlapping subject matter and there is nothing of record to show them to be obvious variants." Action page 3. Applicants respectfully disagree.

For example, independent claim 28 (of Group C), independent claim 36 (of Group D), and independent claim 43 (of Group F) have corresponding encoder/decoder modes of operation and have overlapping subject matter. For example, claim 28 can cover a variable-dimension vector Huffman encoding mode (see the Application at Section IV(A) beginning page 28), while claim 36 can cover a corresponding variable-dimension vector Huffman decoding mode (see the Application at Section IV(B) beginning on page 33). Similarly, claim 43 can cover a variable-dimension vector Huffman encoding scheme (see the Application at Section IV beginning on page 26). In general, because the Groups C, D, and F have corresponding encoder/decoder modes of operation and have overlapping subject matter, the Examiner has not sufficiently explained why there would be a "serious burden" if restriction is not required. (See MPEP §

808.02). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner modify the restriction requirement to group the claims of Groups C, D, and F into a single group.

Claims 1 and 15 have been amended. For example, see the Application at page 26, line 24 to page 31, line 21 and page 33, line 17 to page 35, line 13.

Applicants have canceled the claims of Groups B, E, G, H, and I, claims 12-14, 25-27, 50-51, 41-42, 52-57, 58-71, and 72-77, without prejudice to pursuing the canceled claims in one or more divisional applications.

New Claims

Applicants have added claims 78-83. For example, see the Application at page 26, line 24 to page 31, line 21, page 33, line 17 to page 35, line 13, and original claims 43 and 44. Claims 78-83, as dependent upon independent claims 1 and 15 of Group A, should be included in Group A.

Respectfully submitted,

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